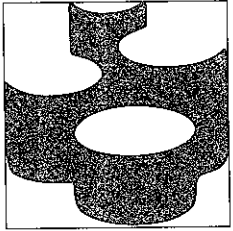


Can Manufacturers



Institute

May 19, 2006

Docket Clerk, Fruit and Vegetable Programs
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The Can Manufacturers Institute, the national association of can manufacturing and its suppliers, strongly opposes the proposed language in the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Rule, which gives favorable treatment to "fresh" products. CMI members operate 175 plants in 36 states and employ over 20,000 people across the country.

CMI believes studies undertaken by the Canned Food Alliance (CFA) conclusively show that canned products are as nutritious as fresh; indeed in some cases "fresh," if not consumed in a timely matter, is less nutritious than other packed or processed products.

The proposed rule contradicts federal nutrition guidelines that identify canned foods as an important part of reaching daily allowances of fruits and vegetables. It also ignores evidence concerning the nutritional benefits and advantages of canned fruits and vegetables.

CMI urges the USDA AMS to comply with the legislative intent of Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (P.L. 108-465) and equal footing to canned and fresh food in issuing the block grants.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss this further.

Robert Budway
President